

Remarks

Method claim 12 is clearly patentable in light of the references of record. The rejection as obvious over Goldsmith and Miyakawa is improper under the law of 35 U.S.C. section 103. Goldsmith teaches a monolith support with a microporous membrane on the passageway surfaces. However, Goldsmith does not disclose the method by which the monolith is made; there is clearly no disclosure or suggestion of fabricating a monolith by reaction bonding as set forth in claim 12.

On the other hand, Miyakawa teaches a monolith formed by sintering, and does not suggest a reaction-bonded monolith. Further, Miyakawa teaches creating a filtration membrane *in situ* by reaction bonding. Miyakawa clearly and unequivocally does not teach or suggest making the membrane-supporting monolith by reaction bonding.

The combination of the references teaches a monolith made by means other than reaction bonding (typically, by extrusion), carrying a membrane created *in situ* by reaction bonding. The combination does not teach the reaction bonded monolith and membrane of claim 12, nor does the combination teach a green monolith that shrinks less than about 5 percent when it is fired. As these features of claim 12 are not taught by or suggested by the references, the references also cannot be fairly read to suggest each of the elements of claim 12. In fact, the combination teaches away from claim 12 in that it teaches creating the membrane by reaction bonding rather than creating the monolith by reaction bonding. Accordingly, under 35 U.S.C. section 103, the claim must be patentable over the references.

If for any reason this Response is found to be incomplete, or if at any time it appears that a telephone conference with counsel would help advance prosecution, please telephone the undersigned in Westborough, Massachusetts, (508) 898-1501.

Respectfully submitted,



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